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Message Text

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ACTION NEA-09

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00

PA-01 USIA-06 PRS-01 SP-02 COME-00 EB-07 LAB-04

SIL-01 /051 W
---------- 086568
R 071530Z MAR 75
FM AMCONSUL CASABLANCA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3339
INFO AMEMBASSY ALGIERS
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY RABAT
AMCONSUL TANGIER

C O N F I D E N T I A L CASABLANCA 163

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: ELAB, PINT, MO
SUBJECT: UMT DAILY SUSPENDED

1. MAGHREB INFORMATION, DAILY NEWSPAPER OF UNION MAROCAINE DE TRAVAIL, HAS NOT REACHED NEWSTANDS SINCE MARCH 3. THIS UNUSUALLY LONG PERIOD OF PRESUMED "SEIZURES" (I.E. CENSORSHIP AFTER PRINTING OF PAPER) HAS ENCOUNTERED MUCH SPECULATION HERE REGARDING POSSIBLE REASONS RANGING FROM GOM DISSATISFACTION OVER PROVOCATIVE LABOR REPORTING TO INFLAMMATORY POLITICAL ATTACKS.

2. UMT DEPSECGEN ABDERRAZAK TOLD LABOFF ON MARCH 6 THAT PAPER HAS NOT SIMPLY BEEN SEIZED BUT HAS BEEN PERSONALLY SUSPENDED BY KING QUOTE INDEFINITELY UNQUOTE.
REASON FOR SUSPENSION, SAYS ABDERRAZAK, IS THAT MARCH 3 ISSUE BLATANTLY IGNORED THRONE DAY, INSTEAD PRINTING AN EDITORIAL BY ABDALLAH IBRAHIM HIGHLY CRITICAL OF REGIME.
ABDERRAZAK SAYS KING SAW PAPER MORNING OF THRONE DAY AND IN A RAGE ORDERED IT WITHDRAWN FROM NEWSTANDS AND PAPER SUSPENDED.
SOME COPIES OF MARCH 3 EDITION DID GET CIRCULATED AND THEY DO INDEED FEATURE SUCH NEWSWORTHY FIGURES AS VISITING MAURETANIAN
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TRADE UNIONIST WHILE IGNORING HASSAN.

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3. ABDERRAZAK CLAIMS OMISSION OF APPROPRIATE ALLUSIONS TO THRONE DAY AN "OVERSIGHT" DUE TO MAHJOUB BEN SEDDIK AND PAPER'S EDITOR BEING PREOCCUPIED WITH OTHER MATTERS. THIS IS OF COURSE BALONEY. SIMPLE TRUTH IS THAT FOR ONCE UMT OVER-STEPPED THE LINE BETWEEN WHAT IS PERMISSIBLE AND WHAT ISN'T. SUSPENSION, IF PROLONGED, MAY HAVE SERIOUS EFFECTS ON PAPER'S VERY SHAKY FINANCES.

4. IRONY OF THIS LATEST CONFRONTATION IS THAT UMT AND UNFP DELIGHTED WITH KING'S THRONE DAY ANNOUNCEMENT POSTPONE ELECTIONS. SOMEWHAT SHEEPISH UMT LEADERSHIP, IT APPEARS, WISHES IT HAD PLAYED THIS ONE DIFFERENTLY.
BRUBECK

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